



News

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DCFS Region Passes Federal Review

The Southwest Region of the Division of Child and Family Services is the first in the state to pass a yearly performance review that is overseen by a federal court monitor.

Known as the Qualitative Case Review, the study looks at everything from child safety to school performance to services provided and how satisfied children and parents are with services they receive.

Southwest needs to pass the review two years in order to be removed from federal court oversight. Annual reviews have been conducted in all five DCFS regions since 1998. Each DCFS region has made progress over the past five years, but Southwest is the first to pass.

The National Youth Law Center sued DCFS in 1993 in federal court for alleged unsafe foster care conditions. The state settled the David C. vs. Leavitt case by agreeing to reform the system. The Qualitative Case Reviews are a major portion of the agreement.

“Each region is positioned to pass this review in the near future,” DCFS Director Richard Anderson said. A second part of the agreement involves passing the Case Process Review that assures caseworkers meet time frames for home visits and paperwork.

DCFS employees have been intensely focused on a major service-delivery change that emphasizes using the strengths of the family to resolve their struggles. All staff are fully trained in the new process.

“Southwest’s achievement shows that we can and will achieve our goals,” Anderson said.

The review involved randomly picking 24 cases and having reviewers from other states and Utah agencies spend two days interviewing everyone involved. People interviewed include parents, children, therapists, physicians, teachers, extended family, foster parents, attorneys and others.

Other DCFS regions will be reviewed later this year.